GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3001
ANSWERED ON:20.03.2008
EXPLORATION IN THE DEEP SEA BY ONGC
Yadav Shri Mitrasen

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has stopped exploration of Oil and Gas in the deep Sea;

(b) if so, the reasons therefore;

(c) whether at present the rigs are not available for drilling with the Corporation;

(d) whether the agreement with Discoverer Seven Seas (DSS) of Trans-Ocean expired in December, 2007 and the said company in presently drilling for Reliance;

(e) if so, whether the exploration work of ONGC in Krishna-Godavari, Mahanadi basin and in the north-eastern coastal bay is likely to be affected adversely; and

(f) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA PATEL)

(a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) ONGC owned rig Sagar Vijay having capability of drilling up to 900 m water depth is presently deployed for drilling in East Coast. Another charter hired rig `Discoverer Seven Seas` having capability of drilling up to 1800 m water depth will be deployed in June/July, 2008. The earlier contract of this rig with ONGC came to an end on 29 December,2007. The rig has been rehired by ONGC and will be deployed after completion of due formalities of dry dock within mobilization period of 180-210 days from the end date of earlier contract. The rig is presently under dry dock in Singapore and will be deployed back in ONGC after completion of due formalities of dry dock.

(e) Out of the total exploration acreages available with ONGC, 34 (28 NELP and 6 under nomination) are in deepwater areas. The deep water drilling programme will be constrained in 17 deep water NELP blocks (4 each in KG and in Mahanadi/NEC basin and 3 each in Andaman, Cauvery & KK basins) and 6 nomination blocks (2each in KG & Mumbai, one each in KK and GK basins) for fulfillment of MWP and in 3 NELP blocks where MWP commitments are met but additional exploratory/ appraisal wells are planned.

(f) Few of the E&P companies have approached Government for a drilling Moratorium for a period about three years for deepwater areas in view of global shortage of deepwater rigs. No final decision has been taken by the Government on this issue.